

Award-winning artist draws on techniques of the Old Masters

By Laurie Williams Sowby
Deseret News correspondent

PROVO — Kent Goodliffe's mother first noticed his artistic talent when he was 3. He would sit in church, drawing nursery rhyme characters she could recognize.

That was 35 years ago. Goodliffe's interest in drawing never let up. More than 50 of his

Utah
County

ARTS

works are being exhibited through December in Gallery 303 of the Harris Fine Arts Center at Brigham Young University. Two days a week the artist turns teacher in the art department upstairs, zeroing in on figure drawing and basic crafts like batik, wood carving, stained glass and lost wax casting. Those same evenings, he teaches art classes at Utah

Technical College at Orem.

Goodliffe said he enjoys the students. "If you get one or two who catch on to what you're talking about, it opens up whole new vistas for them," he said.

Goodliffe was himself a BYU art student, after taking all the art classes he could at American Fork High. He received a bachelor's degree in art in 1970 and followed it with a master's in 1972. He taught at BYU from 1973 to 1978, then took four years off to pursue his art full time. He returned as a part-time faculty member two years ago.

It was while Goodliffe was a graduate student that he first experimented with the toned-ground approach used by Da Vinci, Rubens and other Old Masters. "I was intrigued by some of the things they had done," he said. He first tried drawing with light and dark colors on a flimsy chip board. He kept trying things until he discovered what worked best and could be controlled the best.

Goodliffe tones 100 percent-cotton museum board by treating it with an acid neutralizer, then painting numerous thin layers of acrylic over it until he achieves the desired medium value. Then prismacolors — pencil-type tools that are slightly waxy, rather than like graphite — come into the picture.

Goodliffe creates unusual effect in these and other drawings with special tools, paper and board.

Highlights or direct light are added with lighter shades of prismacolor tools in an accumulation of carefully crosshatched lines.

Darker tools are used to build mass tones that create dark areas or shadows. Middle tones come from the toned paper background.

As far as he knows, the process he now uses is unique. Other artists work in tone grounds, Goodliffe said, but he creates his own, rather than purchasing commercially produced boards that eventually fade.

"God is the supreme creation, and if man is created in God's image, then there is nothing more intriguing, more perfect, to study, draw and paint than the human body."

While most artists use drawings as studies for works in other media, Goodliffe's drawings are intended to stand as finished works. He has a lot of favorites, not just one. "Unfortunately," he said, "most of them are sold and gone, and I never get to see them again."

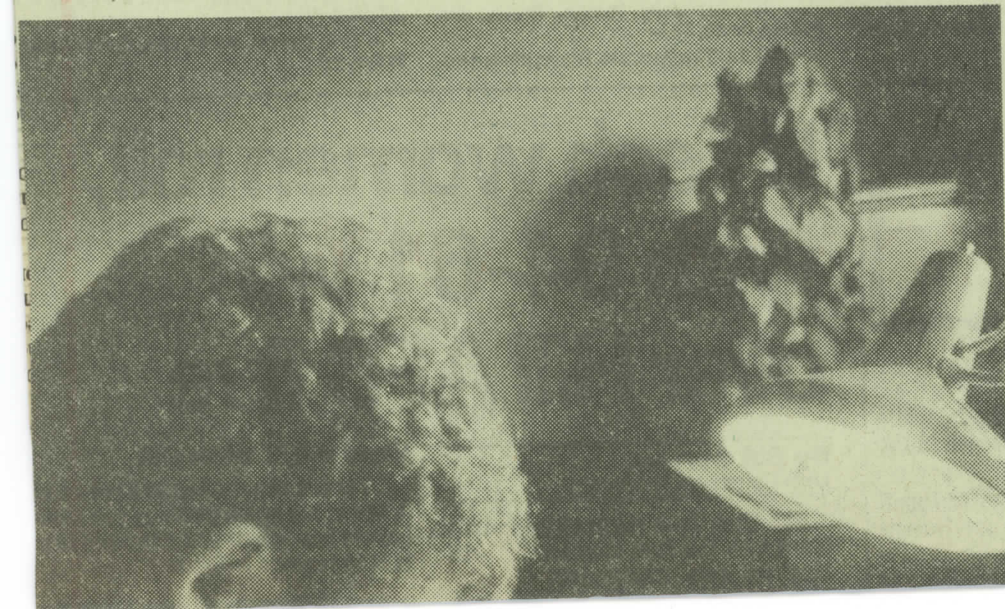
For the current one-man show, he said, "I had to borrow a lot of them back." Hanging in the gallery are 42 prismacolor drawings, 10 graphite sketches and a wood engraving.

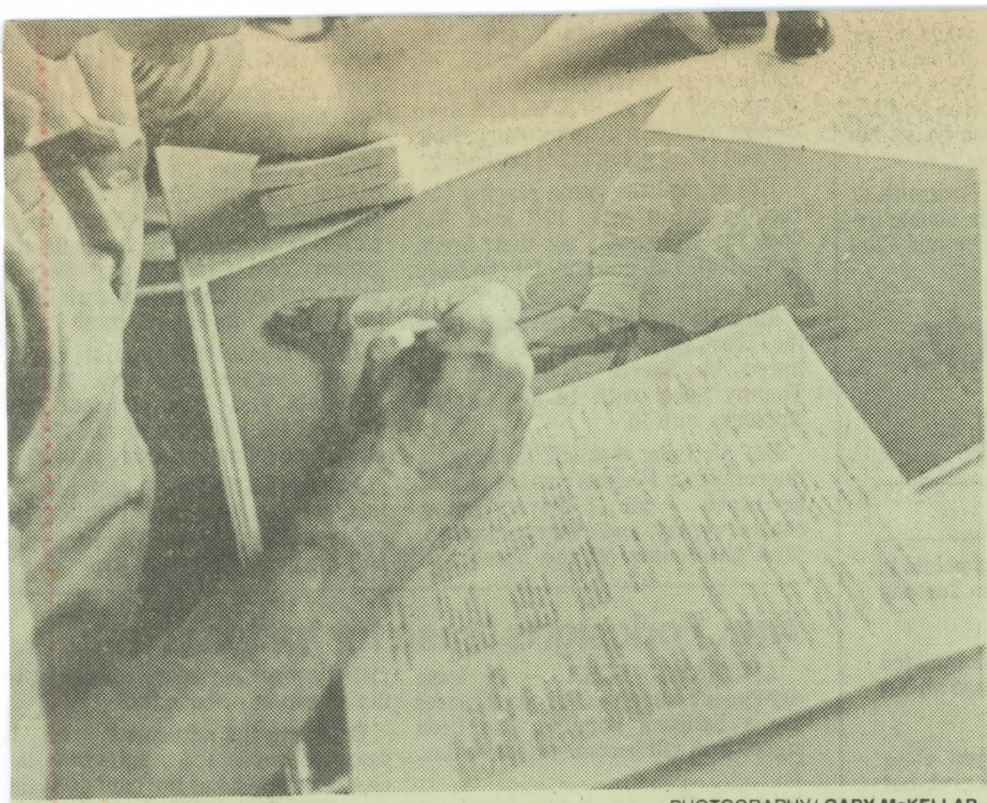
Goodliffe liked his Christ Study in Death No. 2 so well that he kept it himself. It is titled "Greater Love Hath No Man Than This." Religious themes are common in his work. A series on Jesus' death and resurrection is in progress.

Human figures are also common in his drawings. "I am intrigued by man," he said. "God is the supreme creation, and if man is created in God's image, then there is nothing more intriguing, more perfect, to study, draw and paint than the human body." He finds it "so complex, yet so simple at times, that it's almost a contradiction."

Other works in progress include series depicting ballet dancers and symphony musicians. Goodliffe teaches from 8 a.m. until 10 p.m. two days a week, but he tries to put in eight hours on his art other days. His studio is in his home in Provo.

A single drawing may take anywhere from





Kent Goodliffe spends as many as 80 hours on a single drawing.

PHOTOGRAPHY/ GARY McKELLAR

a few to 80 hours, depending on the subject, the design required and Goodliffe's mood. "A lot of what I do is carefully thought out and designed," he said. "But there are some things I can whip out in a few hours."

Goodliffe's drawings have won several awards the past six years, including first-place purchase award, a gold medal, a silver medal and a cash merit award in the Annual National Invitational in the Springville Museum of Art. His work also won two merit awards and two purchase prizes in the Mor-

"A lot of what I do is carefully thought out and designed, but there are some things I can whip out in a few hours."

mon Festival of Arts, held at BYU. A new drawing was commissioned for the "Art of the Restoration" exhibit now on display at Salt Lake City's Tivoli Gallery.

But Goodliffe said he prefers to put his energies into creating art, rather than trying to track it down to enter in competition.